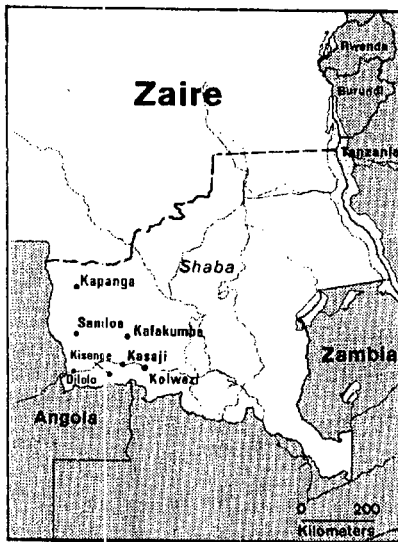


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ZAIRE 23-28

The Moroccan-supported Zairian army is advancing slowly in Shaba Region, apparently hampered more by its own shortcomings than by Katangan resistance. The Nigerian-sponsored talks between Zaire and Angola, meanwhile, seem to have all but ended.

The Zairian-Moroccan force that occupied the important town of Kasaji on May 12 reportedly advanced at least another 20 kilometers west of the town during the next several days. Another government force was reported this week to be halfway between Kafakumba and Sandoa; Kafakumba apparently had been reoccupied by government troops on May 11 after they had gained almost no ground in the area of the town for nearly a month.

To the north, a third government force is advancing slowly on Kapanga, one of the first towns initially occupied by the Katangan invaders. The Katangans reportedly abandoned the town last week and fell back a few kilometers to the south. Sandoa, Kisenge, and Dilolo are the only major towns in Shaba still thought to be in Katangan hands.

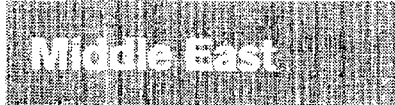
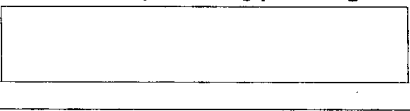
There has been little sign of any concerted effort by the Katangans to stop the four-week-old government advance,

although there is one report that they may attempt a counterattack on Kasaji. The slowness with which government forces are moving is probably due in large part to their own organizational, logistic, and leadership weaknesses. River flooding also is said to be slowing the offensive in the Kapanga area.

Another obstacle may be the reluctance of the Moroccan forces to take the lead. The Moroccans prefer to play more of a supporting role.

Zairian President Mobutu has been in Shaba for four weeks and reportedly intends to remain there until the invaders are forced across the border into Angola. Mobutu, who is making his headquarters in Kolwezi, is portrayed by the government-controlled press as personally directing the war effort. He obviously is trying to reinforce his political stature by minimizing the role of his military commanders and claiming personal credit for recent military gains.

Since last week, the talks between Zairian and Angolan representatives apparently have been either in recess or adjourned. The question of a neutral border police force, advocated by Mobutu, remains a major sticking point. Nigerian



ISRAEL 29-30

The task of forming a new Israeli government and the prospects for Middle East peace negotiations were plunged into new uncertainties this week when the long-dominant Labor Party lost its plurality to the right-wing Likud grouping in the parliamentary election on May 17. The outcome makes Likud leader Menahem Begin the key person at the start of negotiations for a new coalition government, but it is by no means certain

that he will succeed.

On the basis of unofficial returns, Likud won at least 41 of the 120 Knesset seats; Labor and its close ally, Mapam, came in second with 33. The new Democratic Movement for Change, a reformist party, took 14 seats, and the National Religious Party, the guardian of orthodox Jewish laws and values, won 12 seats. The remaining seats were scattered among small parties.

Negotiations among the main parties are sure to be difficult and protracted. Begin will get together quickly with the conservative Religious Party, which shares Likud's opposition to returning any part of the occupied West Bank to Arab rule, but he will need the support of either the Democratic Movement or Labor to form a viable majority coalition. Begin announced immediately after his party's victory became apparent that he would seek to form a government of national unity. The odds seem heavily against such an outcome, but the dynamics of coalition negotiations have been basically altered by the emergence of the new party and at this early stage nothing is to be excluded.

Labor's leaders, for their part, appear divided on strategy. Some, including the party's campaign manager, say flatly that Labor will not enter a Likud-led cabinet. Party leader Peres, however, has been more noncommittal and may wait to see what Begin offers. Labor's course during the negotiations will be influenced by the knowledge that if Begin finally is unable to form a government, Labor could get a crack at it or at appealing to the electorate again in a new election.

A conservative government led by Begin would give neighboring Arab states special pain. Although Arab leaders see little difference among Israeli leaders, Begin is particularly anathema to them. A Begin government will confirm their conviction that Israel is not prepared to make the concessions the Arabs consider necessary for peace in the Middle East and will, in turn, reduce Arab willingness to make concessions of their own.

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